

EXPLORING THE REGISTER LANGUAGE OF INDONESIAN SKINCARE SELLER: TRANSACTIONAL AND INTERACTIONAL MOTIVATIONS

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki bentuk linguistik, makna, dan motif yang digunakan oleh penjual produk perawatan kulit Indonesia di TikTok Shop. Metode yang digunakan adalah penelitian kualitatif dengan objek berupa deskripsi produk dan video iklan dari merek perawatan kulit. Data dikumpulkan melalui dokumentasi. Analisis data dilakukan melalui tiga langkah utama: pertama, mengidentifikasi bentuk-bentuk linguistik dengan mengklasifikasikan data dan menentukan mana yang termasuk dalam register kata dan frasa; kedua, menganalisis makna register dengan mempertimbangkan konteks data; ketiga, menerapkan teori model motivasi dari Chen (2020) untuk mengeksplorasi motif di balik penggunaan register tersebut. Hasil penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa bentuk linguistik yang paling sering muncul dalam register adalah kata sifat. Peneliti menemukan satu kata benda, empat kata sifat, satu kata majemuk, dua singkatan, dan dua frasa kata benda. Alasan utama penjual menggunakan bahasa tertentu adalah untuk memberikan rincian yang jelas dan dapat diandalkan tentang produk perawatan kulit mereka, yang disebut dengan motivasi transaksional. Selain itu, penjual juga memiliki motif lain yang disebut motivasi interaksional, yaitu berusaha membangun, menjaga, dan meningkatkan persepsi masyarakat terhadap merek dan produk mereka.

Kata Kunci: Register, Penjual produk perawatan kulit, TikTok, Standar Kecantikan, Model motivasi

Abstract

This research aimed to investigate the linguistics form, meaning, and motive used by Indonesian skincare sellers on TikTok shops. The researchers employed qualitative research design with the object was product description and video ads by skincare brand. The researcher collected the data through documentation. The researchers analyzed the data by identified the linguistic forms by classifying the data and determining which ones belonged to register words and phrases. Second, analyzed the meaning of the registers by considering the context of the data. Third, applied Chen's (2020) motivation model theory to explore the underlying motives behind the use of these registers. Therefore, the researchers revealed the high frequency of linguistics forms of the register was in adjective. The researchers found one noun, four adjectives, one compound, two abbreviation, and two noun phrases. Furthermore, the reason behind the way sellers use language is to give clear and reliable details about their skincare products, which is called transactional motivation. Additionally, sellers also have another motive called interactional motivation. They strive to establish, uphold, and enhance the public perception of their brand and products.

Keywords: Register, Skincare seller, TikTok, Beauty standard, Motivation model.

INTRODUCTION

Language is fundamental to social interaction in all societies, regardless of place or period. Language and social engagement are mutually reinforcing: language shapes social interaction, and social interaction shapes language. Language is crucial to the establishment of meaning in society. Sociolinguistics is a branch of linguistics that investigates the interaction of language and society, specifically how language is used and influenced

in various locations and social circumstances. One of the studies of language variation in sociolinguistics is register.

According to Halliday (1992), a register is a semantic term that can be characterized as a meaning arrangement that is explicitly tied to a certain situational arrangement of fields, participants, and means.

The arrangement of the circumstance is known as the context. Specific professional (occupational) groups typically use registers. Each occupational group has different specific vocabularies associated with it. For

example, football athletes rely on specific vocabularies to communicate effectively with their teams, especially in the context of the sport. These specialized terms and words are used in particular settings like stadiums or training facilities during matches, training sessions, and conversations.

Besides football athletes, skincare sellers also apply specific vocabularies in promoting their products. Those words may be unfamiliar if we do not belong to their consumers. These unique vocabularies are used to engage and educate consumers about the benefits and features of skincare products. In today's market, effective marketing strategies are crucial for promoting products and capturing the attention of potential consumers (Rehman, 2017). Thus, specific terms skincare sellers use can effectively communicate their products' advantages and unique selling points of the products. With the massive number of social media users nowadays, skincare sellers tend to promote their products through social media. Thus, social media gave birth to the concept of social advertising and emerged as a new trend in marketing (Ohajonu & Mathewes, 2015).

The concept of social advertising involves promoting businesses through social networking sites. It has gained widespread acceptance worldwide. As a result, skincare companies are now reevaluating their marketing strategies to engage with consumers on a more personal level (Rauniar et al., 2014). This shift in advertising patterns has brought businesses into a new era (Rehman, 2017). In Indonesian society, social advertising through the TikTok platform has become a prominent platform for advertising at the individual and business levels. According to the latest data on TikTok's advertising reach, Indonesia has the second-highest number of TikTok users globally, with an impressive 113 million users. This makes Indonesia the largest TikTok market in Southeast Asia. Therefore, platforms like TikTok become powerful channels for promoting and endorsing skincare products.

Additionally, it is worth noting that the promotion of skin care products is influenced by cultural beauty standards, even at a regional level. For example, consider the Indonesian beauty standard, which often emphasizes natural, glowing, white skin (Rizki et al., 2020). Skincare sellers operating in Indonesia may adjust their marketing strategies to align with these specific cultural beauty standards, focusing on products that function as brightening. Due to the widespread influence of beauty standards, individuals may feel compelled to consider certain aspects of their appearance as necessities. The pervasive nature of these standards can create a sense of societal pressure, leading people to prioritize specific beauty practices or products in order to meet these perceived expectations

Beauty standards and skincare can be related to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory. Maslow (1943), suggests that there are five basic levels of needs in the form of a pyramid: (1) physiological needs, (2) safety and security needs, (3) love and belongingness needs, (4) esteem needs, and (5) self-actualization needs. The theory provides valuable insights into the relationship between beauty standards and self-actualization, which is the highest level of needs in the hierarchy. Self-actualization represents the desire for personal growth, fulfillment, and the realization of one's full potential. Beauty standards created by society and the media can impact people's desire for self-actualization. People attempt to meet these standards because they believe it will boost their self-esteem and confidence. However, if basic needs are not met, it can hinder progress toward self-actualization, leading to insecurity and low self-esteem.

Due to the importance of meeting various needs within Indonesian beauty standards, a phenomenon known as FoMO (Fear of Missing Out) has emerged in the skincare industry. The phrase was first used to describe a phenomenon found on social networking platforms in 2004. Gupta & Sharma (2021), considered that FOMO involves two processes. First is the fear of losing out, followed by compulsive behavior to ensure they are not missing out. FOMO refers to the anxiety or fear of not being up to date with the latest trends or missing out on the benefits of certain skincare products or routines. By the use of specific vocabularies or registers, skincare sellers capitalize on this phenomenon by creating a sense of urgency and exclusivity around their offerings, enticing consumers to make immediate purchases to stay in line with the current beauty standards. Furthermore, a register applied by skincare sellers in TikTok shops can drive these FoMO phenomena and increase sales within the skincare industry.

There are several previous studies that investigate the use of registers in various contexts, such as Haryani & Ainur (2021), which analyze the use of the register by photographers found on Instagram. The researchers categorize dialogues into register words and phrases and reveal the meaning based on Larson's theory (1989). They also explore the motive behind using these registers based on Hockett's theory (1958). The previous studies and this research were similar in classifying the register forms and the data collection technique. The difference was related to the subject and theory to explore the motive. In this study, the researcher chooses skincare sellers on TikTok shops as the subject and uses the theory of motivation model (Chen, 2022). Another study on the register forms and functions within the context of buying and selling hand-phones on the social media platform Facebook was conducted (Thufail, 2016). The similarity between

Tufail's study and this research was on the register form and function. The difference was related to the research subject and the platform that use to analyze. Riyanton (2020), also conduct research about the register in Animal selling buying activities in Wonosobo Central Market. He explores the morphological registers, including words, phrases, acronyms, and abbreviations.

The researchers in this study aim to contribute to register analysis by focusing on the language used by skincare sellers on TikTok shops. This research differs from previous studies because it added the motive analysis using the motivation model theory proposed by Chen (2020). By examining the registers employed in the language of skincare sellers on TikTok, the researchers aim to enhance our understanding of register usage in digital marketing and related to the FoMO phenomena. The study has three main objectives. Firstly, it seeks to investigate the linguistic forms of registers used by skincare sellers on TikTok shops. Secondly, the study aims to explore the meaning conveyed by the registers utilized in the language of skincare sellers. Lastly, the study aims to identify the motives behind the use of registers in the language of skincare sellers.

MOTIVATION MODEL OF PRAGMATIC (MMP)

The Motivation Model of Pragmatics (MMP) is a framework that focuses on studying language use within specific contexts by examining the underlying motives behind the selection and employment of linguistic devices or pragmatic strategies (Chen, 2022). This model seeks to reveal the relationship between language use, the motivations driving it, and the specific linguistic choices or strategies employed. Chen's Motivation Model of Pragmatics (MMP) consists of two levels. At the first level, motivations are categorized as either transactional (related to information transmission) or interactional (related to the speaker-hearer relationship). At the second level, transactional motivations are further divided into clarity and effectiveness, while interactional motivations are divided into maintaining the public image of others and maintaining the public image of oneself. These divisions do not represent strict dichotomies but display a gradient relationship, ranging from conflicting to assisting, depending on the context. This means the motivations can be in opposition, mutually supportive, or anywhere between, depending on the specific situation.

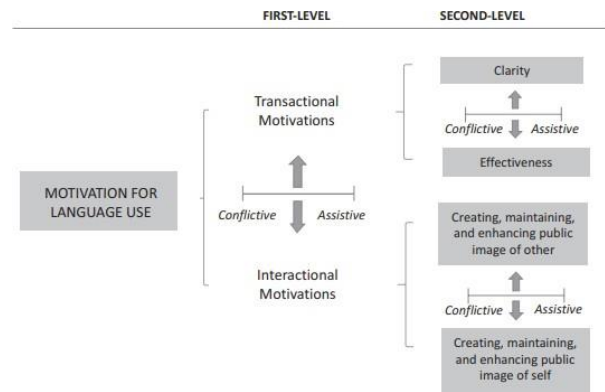


Figure 1. Motivation Model of Pragmatics (MMP)

Based on the figure 1, The first level of motivation in the MMP framework is divided into two categories: transactional motivation and interactional motivation. Transactional language primarily focuses on conveying factual or propositional information. For instance, a doctor providing instructions to a patient on how to take medication would be an example of transactional language use. In this scenario, the doctor's motive is to effectively communicate the necessary information to ensure proper patient care.

E.g. [1]

Doctor: *It's important to take your prescribed antibiotics twice a day, after meals.*

This will help fight the infection and speed up your recovery.

On the other hand, interactional language is used to establish and maintain social relationships. An example of interactional language is when a woman gossiping with their friend. The conversation continues with no specific purpose or information transfer, but it keeps the interaction going and maintains the social bond.

E.g. [2]

A: *Hey, have you heard about Sarah's new job? She's working at that fancy tech company now.*

B: *Wow, she's an awfully inspiring person. I admire her a lot*

Moving to the second-level motivations, in the transactional category, we have clarity and effectiveness. Clarity is a motivation that arises from the fact that language provides multiple ways to express the same idea. When choosing how to communicate, clarity becomes a significant consideration for speakers. For example, in greetings, there are various options such as "How're you?", "How are you doing?", "What's up?", and many more. Each choice is influenced by the speaker's desire to convey their message clearly in a given situation or speech act. The second motivation in the interactional category is effectiveness, which relates to the success of a communication act in achieving its intended purpose. For instance, when I ask my busy colleague for assistance with a project, their response could vary. They might

immediately offer their help, experience a slight delay before responding, or find a way to avoid helping altogether. Recognizing these possibilities, I would carefully phrase my request to maximize its effectiveness and ensure it achieves the desired outcome: receiving assistance from my colleague despite their busy schedule.

In the second-level motivations for the interactional category, there are two sub-motivations: "Creating, maintaining, and enhancing public image of other" and "Creating, maintaining, and enhancing public image of self." The concept of public image refers to how a person is perceived by others, encompassing aspects of self-actualization, self-esteem, belongingness, and love, as well as relatedness and growth needs. The desire to have a desirable public image is considered universal across cultures. Creating, maintaining, and enhancing the public image of self refers to the motivation behind individuals' actions and language choices to shape how others perceive them. It involves consciously presenting oneself in a way that aligns with one's desired image, reputation, or identity. People engage in behaviors, use specific language, or adopt certain communication strategies to manage and control the impression they make on others. The concept of public image of self encompasses various aspects such as self-presentation, self-representation, and impression management. It relates to individuals' desires for recognition, respect, and acceptance from others and their need to maintain a positive sense of self-esteem and self-worth. By carefully crafting their public image, individuals seek to elicit desired responses, establish social connections, gain influence, or achieve personal and professional goals. While "other" typically refers to the hearer and "self" to the speaker, it's important to note that both can also represent a group. For example, a spokesperson at a press conference speaks on behalf of the U.S. administration, and a diplomat's self at a negotiation table represents their country.

METHOD

The researchers employ a qualitative research design for this study. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), qualitative research is focused on exploring and comprehending meaning. Similarly, Schutt and Check (2012), state that qualitative research typically starts by investigating what individuals think, how they behave, and the reasons behind their actions in specific educational contexts. The object of the research is product description and video ads create by skincare seller on TikTok app. The data are register in the form of words and phrases used by the sellers. The researchers took the source of data from the user of skincare product @theoriginote @skintific_id and @npureofficial on TikTok platform. These three accounts were selected for the research because their

skincare products have successfully sold more than a hundred thousand units through the TikTok shop.

This study will apply documentation as a data collection technique. The data were taken from product description and video uploaded by skincare seller on TikTok. Document analysis refers to the examination and study of documented human communications, including various forms such as books, websites, paintings, and laws (Babbie, 2010). Document analysis is a data collection technique where written documents are analyzed to draw conclusions based on the study's parameters. This approach is primarily employed in qualitative research. In document analysis, the researcher needs to identify and determine the type of document being analyzed, such as reports, records, or other forms of written material. In this study, the term document refers to the register deliver by Indonesian skincare seller taken from the product description section and transcript of the video provided. The data gathering process involved several steps: 1) thoroughly reading the product description and closely watching the TikTok videos created by skincare sellers; 2) identifying and documenting the registers used by the sellers; and 3) listing down the registers.

After data collection, the researchers proceeded with the analysis using the following steps: first, identified the linguistic forms by classifying the data and determining which ones belonged to register words and phrases. Second, analyzed the meaning of the registers by considering the context of the data. Third, applied Chen's (2020) motivation model theory to explore the underlying motives behind the use of these registers. Finally, based on the data analysis, the researchers drew conclusions and provided suggestions for further action.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

After analyzing the collected data, the researchers categorized it into two types: words and phrases. The word data was classified based on the content and structure of the words, including nouns, adjectives, abbreviations, and compounds. The phrase data consisted of noun phrases. The findings of the study were based on the linguistic form of the register, the meaning conveyed by the register in the context of the skincare industry, and the underlying motivations behind its use.

1. Word

a). Adjective

➤ Data 1: greasy

Skintific_id: *teksturnya ringan, gak bikin greasy.*

In the given sentence, the register used is "greasy," which falls under the category of an adjective. Typically, the word "greasy" refers to something that is covered with or full of fat or oil. However, in the context of the sentence,

the seller is using it to describe the texture of their product when applied to the skin. The motive behind using this word can be attributed to transactional motivation, specifically clarity. By employing the term "not greasy," the seller aims to convey a clear message about the product's effect on the skin. They want to assure potential customers that their product does not leave an oily residue or make the skin appear greasy after application. This linguistic choice allows the seller to effectively communicate the desired outcome of using the product, emphasizing its nongreasy nature. The seller cleverly uses the word "greasy" in a different way to help customers visualize how their product feels on the skin, emphasizing that it is not oily. This creative linguistic approach simplifies the product description and improves communication with potential buyers.

➤ Data 2: buttery

Skintific_id: *ini enak banget, teksturnya **buttery** jadi mudah di aplikasikan*

The register used in the sentence is "buttery," functioning as an adjective. It typically refers to something containing or tasting like butter. However, in this context, the word "buttery" is used metaphorically to describe the lightweight and smooth texture of the clay mask product. When applied to the skin, the mask melts effortlessly, similar to how butter melts on a warm surface. The motive behind using this register can be attributed to the need for clarity in conveying the unique texture of the product. Although there are alternative words that could be used, "buttery" effectively captures the desired meaning.

➤ Data 3: glowing

Skintific_id: *pengen punya wajah cerah dan **glowing**?*

The skincare seller uses the word "glowing" as an adjective. Normally, "glowing" means praising something with enthusiasm. However, in this context, the seller uses it to describe the desired Indonesian beauty standard of having white, smooth, and radiant skin. The seller's motivation for using this word is to effectively communicate the message and achieve the desired outcome. In advertising, simply saying "buy X" may not always be successful. The challenge lies in finding the most effective way to convey the message so that the audience will think of the product when they need it. Therefore, effective advertisements are those that guide the audience to the desired conclusion without explicitly telling them to buy the product. Instead of explicitly stating "buy this product for white skin," the seller asks, "do you want radiant and glowing skin?" This appeals to the beauty standards that potential buyers aspire to, making the message more relatable and engaging.

➤ Data 4: hypoallergenic

In the product description of their facial wash, @npureofficial uses the term "hypoallergenic." This word signifies that the product is formulated to be less likely to cause allergic reactions. By employing this medical term, the speaker aims to provide clear and factual information about the product's properties. Thus, the motive behind using the term "hypoallergenic" aligns with the transactional motivation, specifically clarity.

b). Noun

➤ Data 1: erythema

In the product description of the moisturizer by @npureofficial, the term "erythema" is used. This noun refers to the redness of the skin. The seller includes this medical term to provide factual information about the product, highlighting its effectiveness in reducing or addressing skin redness. By using the word "erythema," the seller aims to convey clear and specific details about the product's effects, aligning with the transactional motivation of clarity.

c). Abbreviation

➤ Data 1: Hyalu-C

The abbreviation "Hyalu-C" used in the product name of @theoriginote serum stands for hyaluronic acid and vitamin C. The seller highlights "Hyalu-C" as the main ingredient of the product to provide information about its formula. Hyaluronic acid is responsible for moisturizing the face, reducing the appearance of fine lines by promoting supple skin, and improving facial texture. Vitamin C, on the other hand, accelerates collagen production, brightens the skin, maintains its suppleness and firmness, restores a youthful and smooth look, and enhances the effectiveness of sunscreen to protect the face from sun damage. The motive behind using the abbreviation "Hyalu-C" is to ensure clarity in delivering this information in an engaging and interactive manner, aligning with the transactional motivation of effective communication.

➤ Data 2: pH balance

The term "pH" is short for "potential of hydrogen" or "power of hydrogen." @npureofficial skincare seller uses the phrase "pH balance" to describe skincare products that maintain the natural pH level of the skin. This helps to keep the skin's protective barrier, known as the acid mantle, in a healthy state. The motive behind using this term can be seen as transactional, clarity, aiming to provide clear information about the benefits of pH-balanced skincare to potential buyers.

d). Compound

➤ Data 1: Bright boost

This register, "bright boost," is found in the product description of serum by @npureofficial. It is a compound word that combines two words to create a single concept

or product name. In this case, "bright boost" represents a specific ingredient or formulation that aims to enhance the brightness of the skin. The seller uses this compound to convey the main claim of the product, which is its ability to improve skin brightness. The motive behind using this register is transactional motivation, specifically effectiveness. By using the compound "bright boost," the seller effectively communicates the product's intended benefit and aligns with the Indonesian beauty standard, appealing to potential consumers

2. Phrase

a). Noun phrase

➤ Data 1: Skin barrier

Skintific_id: *moisturizer ini bagus banget buat memperbaiki skin barrier kamu*

The term "skin barrier" in the sentence refers to the outermost layer of the skin that protects the body and maintains its water balance. It is a noun phrase consisting of the noun "skin" as the main word and the adjective "barrier" as a descriptive term. The seller uses this phrase to convey that their product is specifically designed to improve the skin barrier. The motive behind using this language is interactional motivation, particularly the sub motivation of creating, maintaining, and enhancing the public image of their brand. By highlighting the importance of the skin barrier and emphasizing their product's ability to enhance it, the seller aims to establish their skincare brand as an expert in improving skin health and promote a positive public image associated with their brand.

➤ Data 2: Basic skincare

Theoriginote: *tenang, kita ada paket bundle untuk basic skincare*

The term "basic skincare" in the sentence is a phrase where the word "basic" describes the type of skincare being referred to. It represents the essential practices and products involved in taking care of one's skin. The seller uses this phrase to indicate a set of three products (cleanser, moisturizer, and sunscreen) that are considered fundamental for a skincare routine. This approach is driven by transactional motivation, specifically the effectiveness of marketing. By promoting the concept of basic skincare and offering a bundled set of products, the seller aims to communicate the simplicity and necessity of using these three products together, making it convenient and effective for consumers.

Based on the result of the present study above, the high frequency of linguistics form is adjective. There are four kinds of adjectives that can be found in skincare seller's video ad and product descriptions such as greasy,

buttery, glowing, and hypoallergenic. Another word formation is noun which is presented by erythema, abbreviation such as Hyalu-C and pH balance. Then, the compound is presented by a bright boost. Besides word formation, there are two kinds of noun phrases, namely, skin barrier and basic skincare. The registers applied by skincare sellers deliver the particular purpose of promoting their product through digital marketing. These linguistic choices were carefully made to effectively promote their products in the digital marketing context. The adjectives described product qualities, while noun phrases emphasized the importance of maintaining a healthy skin barrier and highlighted the essential nature of skincare routines. The word formations and abbreviations served as concise and memorable terms to capture the attention of potential buyers. Overall, the selected registers aimed to clearly communicate the unique features, benefits, and values of the skincare products.

Skincare sellers use these registers for specific reasons. They carefully choose and use them to achieve their marketing goals. One main reason is to provide clear and accurate information about their products, which is known as transactional motivation. They want to communicate the special features, advantages, and effectiveness of their skincare items by using adjectives, word formations, abbreviations, compounds, and noun phrases. Moreover, sellers have another motive known as interactional motivation. They want to create, maintain, and improve the public image of their brand and products. They select registers that align with their desired brand identity and reputation. The table below provides the motivation model for register use by Indonesian skincare sellers on TikTok:

No	Register	Meaning	Transactional motivation		Interactional motivation	
			Clarity	Effectiveness	public image of other	public image of self
1.	Greasy	The oily texture when applied the product to the skin	✓			
2.	Buttery	the lightweight and smooth texture of the clay mask product. When applied to the skin, the mask melts effortlessly.	✓			
3.	Glowing	Indonesian beauty standard of having white, smooth, and radiant skin		✓		
4.	hypoallergenic	the product is formulated to be less	✓			

		likely to cause allergic reactions				
5.	erythema	the redness of the skin	✓			
6.	Hyalu-C	stands for hyaluronic acid and vitamin C	✓			
7.	pH balance	skincare products that maintain the natural pH level of the skin	✓			
8.	Bright boost	specific ingredient or formulation that aims to enhance the brightness of the skin		✓		
9.	Skin barrier	The outermost layer of the skin that protects the body and maintains its water balance			✓	
10.	Basic skincare	a set of three products (cleanser, moisturizer, and sunscreen) that are considered fundamental for a skincare routine		✓		
Σ			6	3	1	0
Σ			60%	30%	10%	0

Based on the table above, the dominant motive observed is transactional motivation, specifically the sub-motive of clarity. Skincare sellers tend to convey information using alternative terms or expressions. The clarity motive is employed to present medical terminology and assure the audience that their skincare products are dermatologically tested. Additionally, sellers utilize effectiveness motives, such as the words "glowing," "bright boost," and "basic skincare," to promote their products in line with the Indonesian beauty standard. Rather than using a direct approach like "buy this," they choose registers that align with the beauty standard desired image. Furthermore, there is a tendency towards interactional motivation, particularly the sub-motive of "creating, maintaining, and enhancing the public image of others," which allows sellers to showcase their brand image focused on improving the skin barrier through specific ingredients they offer.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis conducted, several conclusions can be drawn. First, the skincare sellers on TikTok demonstrate a strong understanding and usage of various linguistic forms in their product descriptions and video ads. This showcases their expertise and knowledge in effectively communicating with their target audience.

Second, the sellers utilize specific meanings and terminology related to dermatology and the Indonesian beauty standard to appeal to consumers in the digital marketing realm. By employing these relevant meanings, they are able to generate effective communication and engage with their audience. The motives behind their communication can be categorized as transactional and interactional, aiming to inform and create a positive image for their brand. This research serves as a valuable reference for other researchers interested in the topic of register, particularly in the context of digital marketing. Future research could focus on exploring how the use of different language styles and registers in skincare marketing affects consumers' perceptions and their decision-making when purchasing skincare products.

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